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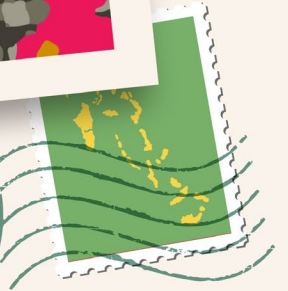
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TOASTMASTERS INTERNATIONAL MISSION:

We empower individuals to become more effective communicators and leaders.



WHERE LEADERS ARE MADE

The *Toastmaster* magazine (ISSN 00408263) is published monthly by Toastmasters International, Inc., 9127 S. Jamaica St. #400, Englewood, Colorado, United States 80112.

Published to promote the ideas and goals of Toastmasters International, a nonprofit educational organization of clubs throughout the world dedicated to teaching skills in public speaking and leadership.

The official publication of Toastmasters International carries authorized notices and articles regarding the activities and interests of the organization, but responsibility is not assumed for the opinions of the authors of other articles. The *Toastmaster* magazine does not endorse or guarantee the products it advertises.

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What You Gain From Leadership

As I talk to members around the world, I'm often asked, "Why should I take on a leadership role in Toastmasters?" What I think they're really asking is *what's in it for me?*

Early in my Toastmasters membership, I was faced with the same question. The club leadership committee came to me and asked me to take on a club officer role, the role of Vice President Education, and I had to think about it. Did I have the time and the commitment to do the job properly? More importantly, what could I learn while doing the job?

Toastmasters' leadership roles have two purposes. One is to provide the necessary function for the club or the District. The second one, the more important one, is to provide an opportunity for you to learn and grow as you take on new leadership tasks. Every leadership role has transferable skills. Club officers learn how to lead a small team. They learn how to budget effectively for the club. They learn how to manage paperwork and administer meetings.

The most important purpose of taking on a leadership role is to provide an opportunity for you to learn and grow as you take on new leadership tasks.

For many members, the Area Director role is the first District-level role they take on. That role might be someone's first opportunity to lead a team without having any authority. The Area Director's primary role is to partner with club leaders to brainstorm and carry out solutions. They must learn to use personal influence to affect the thoughts and actions of those around them.

When you get to the District level of leadership, you really start learning executive leadership. You're no longer an individual contributor. You're expected to lead a team of people to accomplish the District mission: start new clubs and help all clubs achieve excellence. And in that process, you learn valuable skills that will make you more confident as a leader, skills you can then apply to a community organization, your family, or your business.

So when members ask me: "What do you get from being a Toastmasters leader? Why should I take on a club officer role or a District-level role?" I tell them without reservation that they will become a more confident leader. They will have the opportunity to gain new skills and accomplish things they didn't know were possible.

I know that's been the case for me, and I believe it will be the case for you as well.

Matt Kinsey, DTM
International President

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Cover: Anthony Longley and Pamela D. Rolle at Montagu Beach.
Photo Credit: Anthony Longley



News

Contest Rulebook Update

The 2023–2024 *Speech Contest Rulebook* takes effect July 1. One of the key rulebook updates relates to the contest eligibility of District officer candidates. The rulebook now clarifies that you cannot compete in a current Toastmasters speech contest cycle while you are a District officer or a **candidate for an elective District officer position**. Specifically, the rulebook states that candidates “for District positions elected by the District Council for the term beginning the upcoming July 1” are ineligible to compete. Candidates for appointed positions, however, are eligible.

Promote the 2023 Convention With Zoom Backgrounds

Show your spirit for the 2023 International Convention in The Bahamas with tropical-themed Zoom backgrounds. Download the [backdrops](#) and display them during online meetings to get others excited for the four-day event, taking place in person and online from August 16–19.

Update Your Club Information

It’s the start of the new program year, a perfect time to update your club’s information. Keeping this information current helps potential members know how and where to find you. You can also include your club’s website and Facebook page.

Club officers can update their club’s information in the [Club Contact and Meeting Information](#) tab. Don’t forget to also enable (or disable) the self-pay option for club members.

Fill Out Club Success Plan

Club officers, remember to fill out the [Club Success Plan](#) for the 2023–2024 program year. This resource helps your club focus on achieving goals within the Distinguished Club Program. A newly updated version of the plan was launched last year and is available online and in a fillable PDF format.

If you have questions regarding the Club Success Plan, email the Club and Member Support Team at clubofficers@toastmasters.org.

Tune In! Harnessing the Power of Your Voice

Do you cringe at the sound of your own voice? In [this episode](#) of *The Toastmasters Podcast*, hear tips from 20-year vocal coach and recording artist Jillian Mitchell on how you can improve the quality of your voice and use it for powerful effect.

Letters to the Editor



Thanks for the article “[Cultivating Inclusive Audience Awareness](#)” (October 2022). As a Toastmaster, I have had the opportunity to meet leaders from around the world. This has taught me to appreciate the differences. However, I also find that adapting to cultural differences is understood differently by Western leaders. Many expect the rest of the world to adapt to how things are done by them and not vice versa. I hope to see that change happen as there is no culture superior to another.

SWARNA KALYAN, DTM
Singapore

I really enjoyed the article “[Clowning Around](#)” (January 2023). I thought the timing was very good, weeks in advance of the club, Area, and Division speech contests, and there were concrete examples to follow. One update to the Zoom meeting framework I’ve noticed is they’ve updated the tool to include game or ice breaker apps through “Kahoot!” It would be interesting to see the experience of how clubs warm people up when using these apps. Thank you for all your work on the magazine.

PATRICIA PINES
Ellicott City, Maryland

The article “[Know a Narcissist?](#)” (December 2022) has given me the confidence to deal with people in my life. Useful information in abundance. Thank you, editorial staff at the magazine.

ROSALYND O’SHANNASSY
Charlestown, New South Wales, Australia

Thanks for a great idea! “[Create a Conversation Résumé](#)” (December 2022). I have a bad memory and that leaves me feeling unsure of conversation when it comes to social events. I have taken some amazing trips and had some great experiences but don’t remember enough details to bring it up. Going to be on my to-do list to create a conversation résumé.

AUDREY SHAW
Mount Holly, New Jersey

Snapshot



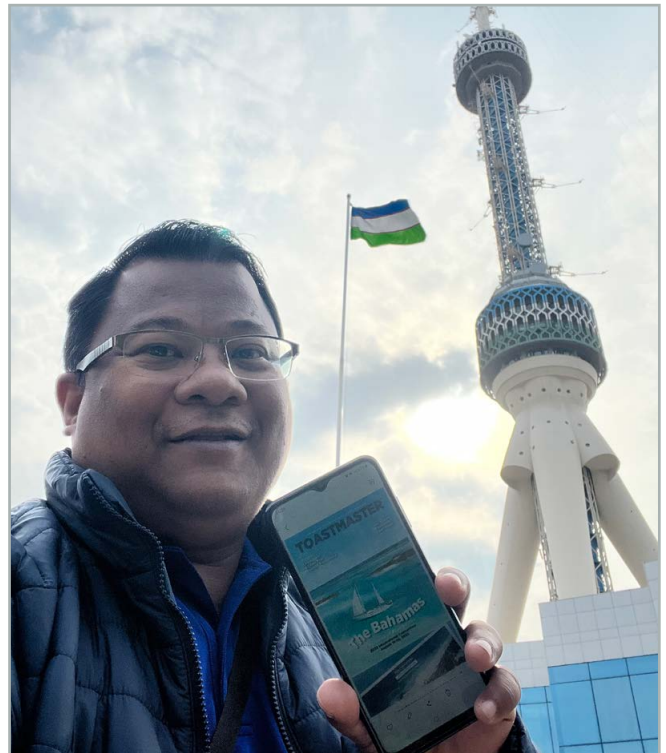
NEE SOON EAST MANDARIN ADVANCED TOASTMASTERS CLUB of Singapore celebrates their five-year anniversary. The members also recently held a group lunch to bond and help shape the culture of the club while also helping to draw new members and retain current ones.



Traveling Toastmaster



RICHARD TERRELONGE of Bridgetown, Barbados, celebrates his five-year effort to complete all Pathways Level 5s in Lisbon, Portugal.



KHALID IDRIS, DTM, of Bukit Jalil, Malaysia, visits the Tashkent Television Tower in Tashkent, Uzbekistan.

International Convention Through the Years

Discover fun facts and photos from past decades.

By Shannon Dewey

2013

82nd annual convention in Cincinnati, Ohio



- George Yen, DTM, became the first International President from Taiwan.
- Introvert expert Susan Cain was the 2013 Golden Gavel recipient.
- Presiyan Vasilev made history as the first Bulgarian native to win the World Championship of Public Speaking® with his speech, “Changed By a Tire.”

1993

62nd annual convention in Toronto, Canada



- Otis Williams Jr. won first place in the World Championship. (Pictured receiving trophy from International President Neil Wilkinson, DTM.)
- Members dressed up for themed events, including the Planet Toastmasters costume party.
- Speeches from convention were made available for purchase on audio and video cassette.

1963

32nd annual convention in St. Louis, Missouri

- Toastmasters founder Dr. Ralph C. Smedley was one of the main convention speakers.
- Over 800 Toastmasters and their families cruised down the river on the S.S. Admiral.
- The Gemini and Mercury space vehicles were placed in the hotel lobby as a tribute to four Toastmasters astronauts.

2003

72nd annual convention in Atlanta, Georgia



- Debbie Fields Rose, founder of Mrs. Fields Cookies, was the Golden Gavel recipient for 2003.
- Ted Corcoran, DTM, was installed as the new International President—the first from Ireland.
- A ventriloquist entertained attendees during a Toastmasters toga party.

1983

52nd annual convention in San Diego, California



- Roy Fenstermaker, 70 years old at the time, won the 1983 World Championship with his speech, “Retirement—Never!”
- Members took an excursion to San Diego theme park Sea World to see a show with Shamu the Killer Whale.



Standing Out in a Crowd of Candidates

I prepared with Pathways, a podcast, and a little help from my Toastmasters friends.

By Mark Ward, DTM

Have you ever wondered how Toastmasters could help you stand out above the crowd to achieve a professional goal?

Shortly after defending my doctor of business administration thesis at the University of Calgary in Alberta, Canada, I was invited to interview for an assistant professor position in the business school at the University of Lethbridge, with campuses in Lethbridge and Calgary. The interview would consist of a 15-minute mini lesson to demonstrate my teaching skills, followed by a panel interview.

I watched a video called “Beyond the Professoriate” to prepare for the academic interview, and learned that I should prepare for questions related to my teaching, my research, and my interest in the University of Lethbridge. The video stressed the importance of practicing interview responses aloud. Sounds like preparing a Toastmasters speech, doesn't it?

I also took advantage of the Pathways curriculum. “Prepare for an Interview” and “Using Presentation Software,” both Level 3 electives in all 11 paths, were ideally suited to help me.

I was uncomfortable tying up a club meeting to practice for the interview. So, Judy Mooney, DTM, our Vice President Education, allowed me to complete these two electives outside the club. I reached out to three Toastmasters friends to facilitate a mock interview. Carolyn Kaldy, DTM, an engineer turned social worker, agreed to evaluate my mini lesson. Mehra Ehsani, a fellow doctoral student, agreed to conduct the interview, and Katherine Anderson, who works to help medical students secure internships at Canadian hospitals, would evaluate my interview responses.

The mock online interview was a disaster. I couldn't get Microsoft Teams to work with my interactive whiteboard technology. I couldn't remember my lengthy answers. Katherine, in the kindest possible way, asked in her evaluation, “Mark, what is your goal with this



Mark Ward, DTM

interview? To look like all the other candidates or to stand out above all the other candidates?”

The honest assessments of my fellow Toastmasters sent my ego-dented subconscious into overdrive searching for strategies on how to stand above the crowd. That evening I was looking through the December 2022 *Toastmaster* magazine, where I tripped across a headline:

The Toastmasters Podcast episode “How to Powerfully Engage Your Audience” grabbed my attention.

“Do You Know About *The Toastmasters Podcast*?” No, I didn't. I clicked the link and scrolled down until podcast #197, “[How to Powerfully Engage Your Audience](#),” with Cathey Armillas, DTM, grabbed my attention. In this podcast, Cathey discusses strategies to remove the “invisible wall” that exists between us as speakers and our audiences.

I thought, *maybe*, applying some of her ideas would help me stand out above the crowd. I adjusted my interview approach accordingly.

To open my mini lesson, I told a story about a fashion designer who used her master of

business administration assignment to develop a business plan to launch her own fashion house. Then I moved into the mini lesson to discuss and ask questions about the design and purpose of various business models.

I attempted to remove the invisible wall when answering interview questions with lead-ins like, “I am not sure whether student mental health is an issue at the University of Lethbridge but ...” and went on to elaborate on how I bring teaching innovation into the classroom to address this issue.

I threw out my carefully worded yet long-winded interview responses and adopted a Table Topics® strategy to break down the wall that pops up when we are too scripted. I identified the top five points that I wanted to make in each category. Then, depending on the question, I drew on one or two of these points to create a clear opening topic sentence before elaborating with a body and conclusion.

Do you have a professional goal where you aspire to stand out above the crowd? Could Toastmasters resources, Pathway projects, podcasts, or most valuable of all, your fellow members, provide you with the

encouragement, skills, experience, and strategies to achieve your goal?

Try and see how these valuable resources could help you. It worked for me, with a little help from my Toastmasters friends. I accepted the position at the University of Lethbridge.

Mark Ward, DTM, is an assistant professor, Dhillon School of Business, University of Lethbridge, and adjunct associate professor, Haskayne School of Business, University of Calgary. He is a member of CanOrators Toastmasters Club in Calgary, Alberta, Canada.

Dare To Be Unconventional

Embrace your unique style to stand out onstage.

By Bill Brown, DTM

There is a well-worn cliché about thinking outside the box. But what about *speaking* outside the box?

Years ago, I worked in voice-over narration, mainly reading for corporate videos. I had a number of competitors in my locale, and we all sounded alike. This was brought home to me one day when we all got together to put on a show for a local charity.

We came to an audio studio to record segments for the program. Afterward, we stood around talking as the producer edited the script in the background. I heard my voice drifting from the edit bay, but I didn't recognize the words. Wow! It wasn't me! At the time I was talking to another narrator and assumed it was him. He then said, "Oh my gosh. We all sound alike!" It wasn't him either. That told me that I needed to become unique in some way.

Speakers, all too often, suffer from that same malady. Granted we all have different voices, but our styles are frequently the same. This is particularly true in the corporate environment, where your job security might be tied to how well you fit the "corporate pattern." While fitting in may be safe, what does it do for your upward mobility?

My challenge to you is to dare to be unconventional onstage.

Each one of us is different. We each have our own unique blend of strengths. Some of you are good at writing a speech. Others are good with voice. I am strong in vocal variety, facial expressions, and stories.

The key is to design a style that accentuates your strengths. While my style is high energy and expressive, it is still relatively traditional. I am looking to expand into keynotes. And, for me, that means developing a signature style. What about you? Are you ready for a change?

If you are ready to push your speaking to another level, I suggest three practices.

1 It takes confidence to be unconventional. Yes, it takes confidence to be different from everyone else. If you lack confidence right now, work to change that. Speak as often as you can in your club and at your job. The more you speak, the more confident you will get. Don't worry about being unconventional just yet. Build that confidence.



Figure out who you are and become that personality onstage.

2 Work on your mindset. If you blend into the crowd, you can hide there, but you may stay hidden. If, on the other hand, you find yourself saying, "Pick me, pick me," you have to give them a reason to do so. You have to want to move ahead. And sometimes, especially if you are an employee, that means moving ahead of your peers. You have to be willing to stand out, which may involve being willing to stick out. You must be willing to accept the attention.

3 If you are to stand out onstage, you have to be yourself. You might be saying, "But I am so bland." If you are thinking about taking your speaking to the next level, you are definitely not bland. Figure out who you are and become that personality onstage.

Take an inventory of where you are strong. Maybe you have a dynamic personality just itching to come out. Maybe you enjoy using your voice to drive your message home. Perhaps facial expressions are your strong suit. Or maybe you are good at portraying various characters, which could lead to having a dialogue between two of them. Then again, perhaps your strength involves powerful phrases and descriptions.

Create your strength inventory, then brainstorm on the various ways that you can incorporate them into your speeches.

Granted, it may be a stretch to use some of those strengths in a corporate environment, but use some creativity. Find a way to stand apart from the rest.

Toastmasters is the perfect place to test it out. Think of the opportunities with Pathways speeches and Table Topics®. My favorite, the Tall Tales Contest, allows you to be as unconventional as you want to be.

I enjoy being onstage. But I enjoy it more when I am being myself. And, for me, that means being a little unconventional. Then, again, I am more effective that way.

How about you? Are you ready to be yourself onstage?

Bill Brown, DTM, is a speech delivery coach in Gillette, Wyoming. He is a member of Energy Capital Toastmasters in Gillette. Learn more at billbrownsspeechcoach.com.

7 Tips to Maximize Your Online Conference Experience

Set yourself up for success when attending a virtual event.

By Amanda Mae Gray

Creating an optimal conference environment might look different than your typical work-from-home or office life.

Online conferences and conventions provide the opportunity for more people to attend and learn than an in-person event might. However, being an online participant requires a different approach and mindset.

What can you do to set yourself up for success when attending an online convention? Below are seven ways to make the most of your virtual experience before and during the event.

Prepare Beforehand

Set up your space.

Creating an optimal conference environment might look different than your typical work-from-home or office life. Decide on a space that includes a tabletop with a comfortable, supportive chair. Clear your space of clutter and make room for your computer or tablet, phone, drink, snacks, and notes. Keep only what you need for the conference on your desk. This helps create a space that not only feels different but also keeps you focused on the conference. Bring in a new candle or some fresh flowers to make your space feel special.

Make sure you have items such as a notebook, pens, chargers for your devices, and headphones that are comfortable for all-day wear. Wearing headphones often makes it easier to stay focused and eliminates outside distractions.

Get snacks and drinks.

If you were going to the conference in person, what would you eat and drink? Take a trip to the grocery store to grab some of those special treats, including drinks that you enjoy and will fuel you. This is a great way to feel like you are still doing something special while keeping you focused on the conference.

Visit the platform, website, and agenda.

Become familiar with the technology of the event to make your experience go smoothly. If it's an option, create a profile with a photo of yourself so that people can easily recognize you. The organization's website can have great insights for the event so that you don't miss a thing. Likewise, it's good to review and print out the agenda to keep track of the conference schedule.

Maximize During

Get dressed for the day.

Think about how you would have packed if you were traveling to the conference. It's easy to dress comfortably, but if you get ready as though you were heading out the

door, it changes your mindset. Plus, when you turn on your camera (and you should turn it on if there is an opportunity), you will feel more confident.

Capitalize on networking.

Utilize the private message feature if available to connect with people who seem interesting. Have your LinkedIn or website link ready so you can quickly send it to others.

Reach out to the speakers after they present or while on networking breaks in virtual rooms. Follow them on their social media channels or send them a quick email on the spot should they share their contact information. It will make their day to know someone paid attention and you will have a new connection.

Use the chat feature.

Most platforms have some form of a chat or messaging feature. Add important points or quotes from the speaker, share a personal example, and respond when a speaker asks you to. This will help you remember the main points and give you the chance to easily network, plus it keeps you engaged.

Finding a fellow attendee to chat with during and after the event can also help you feel connected and remember what you've learned.

Take physical breaks.

Sitting all day for multiple days can be tiresome. Every hour, make it a point to stand up for 2 to 3 minutes. Stretch your arms above your head, move from side to side, and take a few deep breaths. Just make sure your camera and microphone are off while you're doing this!

When there are scheduled breaks, go for a walk outside or around the house to move your body and get the blood flowing. If the event is hybrid, whenever the in-person audience does something physical, do so as well.

After the conference has concluded, review your notes and take time to figure out your action steps from your learning. If you have a colleague who attended as well, meet up for a coffee so you can chat about it. Switch things up from your normal routine to make the experience different and memorable.

Amanda Mae Gray is the founder of blueplate.io, a media company that specializes in branding and video production. She also speaks professionally on confidence and digital marketing. She is a member of Speakers Roundtable Advanced Club in Georgia.

Speak Smart: AI Strategies in Public Speaking

Four ways to use artificial intelligence in presentations.

By Diane Windingland, DTM

“[AI] can help you learn about a topic in a way that a textbook can’t.”

—GEOFF PETERS

The late physicist Stephen Hawking once said, “The development of full artificial intelligence could spell the end of the human race. It would take off on its own and redesign itself at an ever-increasing rate. Humans, who are limited by slow biological evolution, couldn’t compete and would be superseded.”

Despite its rapid rise, artificial intelligence (AI) hasn’t yet taken off on its own, although it seems to be everywhere. AI is used in smart home devices, navigation apps, rideshare apps, facial recognition, spam filters, and more. You can even use AI to create and practice speeches.

As a communication coach, I’ve been successfully incorporating AI in my work with clients. Using AI for some aspects allows me to pay closer attention to the finer details of public speaking, like tone and audience connection, while it catches filler words and phrasing.

AI can’t replace your creative ideas or personal experiences, but it can enhance them and help you develop as a speaker. Here are four ways you can use AI to impact your next presentation:

1 Streamline research and content creation.

In November 2022, the company OpenAI launched an AI-powered chatbot, ChatGPT (Chat Generative Pre-trained Transformer), that can answer questions, write essays and poems, and more.

You can use ChatGPT for fun and to brainstorm, research, and create speech content.

“ChatGPT is like having a personal mentor that you can ask questions,” says Geoff Peters of Best Run Toastmasters Club in Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada, who introduced the use of AI for speechwriting to his club. “It can help you learn about a topic in a way that a textbook can’t. If you don’t understand something, you can ask it to clarify.”

ChatGPT has limitations. Notably, it only has about an 85% accuracy rating, meaning it might not provide the most accurate information. It also has limited knowledge based on the most recent data it is trained on.

“Consider the source’ is what I advise my students,” says Matt Abrahams, a lecturer in organizational behavior for Stanford Graduate School of Business. “You can use the tool to point you to information, but then you have to use your critical-thinking skills to assess the veracity of what you found.”

2 Design slides in minutes.

PowerPoint Designer creates multiple design options for slides, as shown in this how-to [demo video](#). Canva’s

AI design tool Magic Design generates several template designs for multi-slide presentations from a single prompt, as shown in this how-to [demo video](#).

3 Create unique images.

Rather than spending hours searching for an appropriate photo or creating custom art, you can quickly create an image using a generator such as DALL-E. Images are generated from prompts that specifically address the points you want to make in your presentation, saving you time while providing unique, relevant images, royalty free.

4 Get speech feedback.

Toastmasters members have access to [Yoodli](#), an AI-powered public speaking coach. Yoodli provides speech analytics on things like inclusive language and AI coaching feedback. I use Yoodli as my coaching assistant, giving clients “instant replays” during Zoom coaching sessions and quickly providing metrics on things like filler words and pace.

Yoodli and other AI tools supplement speech creation and practice, but they don’t replace writing your own speech, presenting in front of a live audience, receiving feedback from your club members, or performing functionary roles in a Toastmasters meeting. AI can’t fully replicate the experience of presenting in front of people as it can’t provide the immediate feedback that an audience does.

Using AI to perform meeting roles also reduces learning opportunities. While AI may be efficient at counting a speaker’s filler words, having a member perform the Ah-Counter role in a meeting improves the Ah-Counter’s listening skills and increases their awareness of filler words.

However, there are ways AI can enhance your club meetings. Peters offers an example: “When it was International Women’s Day, the Topicsmaster asked ChatGPT, ‘What are some questions to ask on International Women’s Day?’ ChatGPT came up with a list of 10 great questions, such as, ‘How can we ensure access to education and health care for women worldwide?’”

While AI can’t replicate your personal experiences, if you’re stuck coming up with Table Topics questions or need help expanding on a speech topic, AI can help. In time, using AI to enhance speeches may be like using a calculator to do math.

Diane Windingland, DTM, is a presentation coach from St. Paul, Minnesota, and a member of two clubs: PowerTalk Toastmasters and Readership Toastmasters. Learn more at [virtualseechcoach.com](#).

More Essential Tips for Your Toastmasters Toolbox

The basics for social speeches, introductions, and evaluations.

By *Toastmaster* magazine staff

Whether you're a new or seasoned Toastmaster, it's always helpful to review the [fundamentals of public speaking](#). Here are some tips for

speaking in a variety of specific situations, both inside and outside the club.

How to Make Your Social Speeches Shine

In short: Be sincere, gracious, and succinct.

It's good to know that you can apply your Toastmasters skills in a variety of social settings, such as weddings, award ceremonies, and even emotional occasions like funerals.

When you give a social speech, you use the same competencies as a club speech: vocal variety, body language, engaging the audience, and such. But there are also some other things to keep in mind. Here are tips for handling three of the most common social speeches.

Giving a Toast

- Speak from the heart. Be genuine and gracious.
- Incorporate humor into a toast, as long as it's appropriate rather than cringeworthy.
- Keep it short. Keep your comments to the point. Two to three minutes is about right for most toasts.
- Don't be that person who's clearly imbibed too much alcohol before toasting time. You could embarrass

yourself (or the person you're toasting) and say something you'll regret.

Accepting an Award

- Express genuine gratitude for the honor, but don't be falsely modest. This isn't the time to say, "I really don't deserve this." Whoever presented you with the award thought you did.
- Don't do what many award winners do and recite a dull laundry list of obligatory thank-you's. But do thank the organization presenting you with the

award and acknowledge one or two others who played a major role in your achievement.

- As with a toast, don't use humor that might be misguided or strained.

Delivering a Eulogy

- Speak about the person's positive impact on others, especially on those in attendance.
- Decide on the tone—do you want to keep it somber, or does it feel right to incorporate some humor?
- Don't worry if you are overcome by emotion when speaking; everyone there will understand. If you're worried about finishing your speech, ask someone ahead of time to finish it for you if you're not able.
- As difficult as it might be to give a eulogy, know that your heartfelt words will be appreciated.

Basics for all Social Speeches

- Do your research. Find relevant information and anecdotes about the person or group you are talking about.
- Draw on your Toastmasters training. The same principles for delivering a Toastmasters speech apply to a social speech: Write something with an opening, body, and conclusion, know your audience, and keep your speech within the time allotment.
- Be prepared. Practice in front of a trusted friend or family member—or, best of all, your Toastmasters club!



Resources

[Cheers to New Beginnings!](#) by Laura Amann

[How to Accept an Award](#) by Emily Sachs

[Delivering a Heartfelt Farewell](#) by Tammy A. Miller, DTM

"Deliver Social Speeches," a Level 3 elective project in the Pathways learning experience

Step Up Your Speaker Introductions

Put your best foot forward in any setting.

A strong introduction can get the speaker off to a good start, boost their presentation, and intrigue audiences. Here are some tips on doing that.

- Think of the introduction as the fourth part of the speech, and as necessary as a beginning, middle, and end.
- Pathways speakers usually write their own introductions for their evaluator to give. Try to create this piece right after you've finished writing the speech itself, when details are fresh in your mind. Include a few details about yourself or why you chose your topic.
- When introducing someone in your club, usually a Pathways speaker, include the speaker's path, level, and objectives, for the benefit of the audience. It's helpful to practice the introduction, just as you would a speech, so it feels natural, even though you didn't write it.
- When you're introducing someone in a non-Toastmasters setting (for instance, at work or a community event), the introduction should tell the audience who the person is and why their words matter.
- If you're the speaker at a non-Toastmasters event, ask if you can write your own introduction. It's more likely to reveal your passion and expertise on the topic.
- Just as you would with a club speech, give your written remarks to the person introducing you well before the speaking engagement. That gives them time to read it, practice it, and ask questions if needed.

A key rule for all introductions: Think short. A good rule of thumb is to make the introduction about 15% of the speech. That's 45 seconds for a five-minute speech.



Resources

[The Impact of a Strong Speaker Introduction](#) by Greg Lewis, DTM

[Introduction Construction](#) by Maureen Zappala, DTM



Expert Advice for Evaluations

Provide effective feedback for speakers.

As an evaluator, you're demonstrating skills that allow everyone in the club meeting to learn and grow. Here are some tips to help build your skills and confidence in giving helpful feedback to others.

- As the evaluator, take the time to talk with your speaker about their topic and speech goals. Know the specifics of the project your speaker is working in.
- There is an evaluation form for every project in Pathways—evaluators use it to assess how the speaker is growing in skill and confidence through each project. The forms are available for download in Base Camp. Many Toastmasters use the “sandwich method,” which layers the evaluation into three parts: what the speaker did well, suggestions on areas for improvement, and an upbeat conclusion that encourages the speaker to continue growing in their chosen path.
- Don't be intimidated to evaluate experienced speakers. You may notice something no one else has. And it gives you the chance to practice a key meeting role, building confidence for the next time.
- The evaluator plays an influential role. Make your comments constructive and positive overall. Know what to share publicly and when to give feedback in private.

Resources

[Oh, No! I'm Giving My First Evaluation](#) by Bill Brown, DTM

[The Invaluable Evaluator](#) by Greg Lewis, DTM

[Learning to Evaluate Everybody](#) by Megan Preston Meyer

[The Three R's of Preparing to Evaluate](#) by Justin Bordessa, DTM



Get Excited!
**2023 Toastmasters
Convention Preview**

*Boost your skills and
savor the speakers and
camaraderie at the four-
day event in The Bahamas.*



By Toastmaster magazine staff



The Toastmasters International Convention is an annual bonanza of opportunities. It's a place to hear top-notch speakers, talk to members from around the world, and attend programs that engage and entertain.

This year's [International Convention](#) will be special in many ways. For one, it will be held in The Bahamas, home to a very enthusiastic base of Toastmasters. More than 40 clubs are spread throughout the country of approximately 400,000 people. Their enthusiasm will help bring a spirited environment to the convention, where you'll have the chance to learn tips from expert presenters, network and share ideas with fellow members, and enjoy the pageantry and diversity of the four-day event. That holds true whether you attend the hybrid convention in person—in Nassau, capital of The Bahamas—or participate online.

Here's a look at this year's highlights.

Your Online Convention Experience

While you may miss out on the beaches, you certainly won't miss a moment of the convention action if you choose to tune in online. All education sessions and convention events will be live-streamed from the stage in The Bahamas, and speakers who solicit real-time feedback will do so from the online and in-person audiences. Online participants will have access to chat boxes in each session to share their responses to any questions asked and to ask their own questions during speaker Q&As.

In addition, each session will open 15 minutes before the start time so online attendees feel as though they are entering the room with those in Nassau. All attendees will have access to the chat for networking and to allow everyone to feel the buzz of anticipation prior to any events.

Speaking of networking, the Networking Lounge will be open 24 hours a day for Toastmasters to chat with one another no matter where they are in the world. The chat will save throughout the event, so you can scroll back and see what people were discussing while you were away.

Another way to engage with the platform and other members is to earn badges by visiting the various sponsor booths and answering trivia questions that you'll only learn from your visits. Connect with Toastmasters World Headquarters employees in the Marketplace and learn more about how they

work to serve you. The more badges you earn, the higher you are on the leaderboard. Those in the top spots will be placed in a drawing to earn prizes from the Toastmasters Online Store like products and store discounts.

The Opening Ceremonies feature the keynote presentation and the popular Parade of Flags, a long-standing event that showcases the truly international spirit of Toastmasters.

One great perk of online attendance? If the timing of a session, the keynote speech, or the Opening Ceremonies don't work for your schedule, everything will be recorded and posted for you to view at your leisure.

Don't forget to use the hashtag #TIGoesBahamas on your social media channels and post about your experience! Check out the social wall on the convention platform to see all the Twitter posts using the hashtag, including your own.

Opening on a High Note

The Opening Ceremonies feature the keynote presentation and the popular Parade of Flags. The latter is an inspiring sight, as members from around the world—many of them in native attire—parade onstage carrying the flags of their countries. This long-standing event showcases the truly international spirit of Toastmasters.



Convention Information

The Toastmasters 2023 International Convention will be held August 16-19, with the in-person option at the [Grand Hyatt Baha Mar](#) resort in Nassau, Bahamas. Go to the [convention website](#) to register and to learn more details about the four-day event.



Keynote Speaker

Lisa Nichols is a renowned speaker, media personality, and the founder and CEO of [Motivating the Masses](#), whose workshops and programs have transformed the lives of entrepreneurs and businesses around the globe. Her presentation, “Jumpstart Your Greatness”, will help you unblock your mindset, overcome obstacles to achieving your goals, and unleash your potential.

Golden Gavel Presentation

The Golden Gavel is Toastmasters’ most prestigious award and has been presented annually at the International Convention since 1959. The award is bestowed upon someone outside the organization who is distinguished in the fields of communication and leadership. This year’s recipient will be announced shortly; check the [convention website](#) for up-to-date information.

New Slate of Leaders

At the Annual Business Meeting on August 18, Toastmasters will vote on [International Officer and Director candidates](#). You can learn about the candidates for international office in the Candidate Showcase event on August 17.

World Championship of Public Speaking

The wait is almost over—learn who will be crowned champ this year! The eight finalists in the Toastmasters International Speech Contest, representing different parts of the world, will compete in the always highly anticipated World Championship of Public Speaking®. The semifinals take place August 17: four separate contests with seven speakers each. The top two from each contest advance to the championship held two days later. Find out who is representing your region in the [semifinals](#).

Accredited Speaker Program

Want to hear Toastmasters who truly know their stuff? Watch the Accredited Speaker (AS) Program. Candidates for the AS designation speak on a specialized topic in their field; those who attain the title combine expert knowledge with mastery of the spoken word. The candidates give their final presentation before the judges at the convention. Check the convention website for more information on this year’s speakers and learn more about the [Accredited Speaker Program](#).

Get Social!

One of the best things about the annual convention is the chance to mingle and meet with fellow

Accessibility

Every attempt is being made to ensure this convention will be physically accessible to everyone. The convention center is on the ground floor of the resort, where all rooms used for the program will be located. Elevators are available for access into the convention center. In addition, ADA-compliant door openers will provide easy access into and out of the center and hotel.

The Grand Hyatt Baha Mar provides services and accommodations to help guests who may have additional needs or requirements. The resort’s accessible rooms include wide doors, lowered thermostat and light switches, and accessible bathrooms, among other features.





Convention Education Sessions and Speakers

This year, all nine [education sessions](#) will be live-streamed so online attendees feel the same engagement and excitement as in-person attendees. Each session will also be available for On Demand viewing after the session ends.

World Champions of Public Speaking Roundtable

Gain insights on speechwriting, storytelling, overcoming obstacles, and more from three Toastmasters World Champions of Public Speaking: Cyril Junior Dim (2022), Ramona J. Smith (2018), and Mark Brown (1995), as well as panel moderator Accredited Speaker Rochelle Rice, DTM.

No Joke: Engaging Your Audience Like a Clown (Not the Creepy Kind)

Take advantage of the opportunity to glean humor strategies from Don Colliver, a professional clown and comedian. You'll hear entertaining anecdotes and gain practical tips for developing comedic presence, engaging your audience, and connecting through laughter.

Think Faster, Talk Smarter: Steps for Effective Speaking in the Moment

Learn science-based strategies for managing anxiety and creating succinct and compelling content. Matt Abrahams will offer tips to use in a variety of situations: interviewing for a job, handling Q&A sessions, giving effective feedback, doing impromptu speaking, and even making small talk.

Next Slide, Please

Do you need to breathe life into your PowerPoint presentations? Make your slides less sterile? In this session, learn the secret to creating engaging, innovative slide presentations. Dave Henson will offer tips on when to use and not use slides, demonstrate how to treat your slides as "your partner," and even show how slides can save lives!

Leadership and Conflict Resolution: From Collision to Collaboration

Trainer and leadership advisor Simmone Bowe introduces strategies to help leaders effectively manage conflict. The techniques and ideas will enable collaboration, cooperation, inclusion, and support.

Boosting Your Confidence and Interview Success Tips

Gain practical interview tips for both in-person and online interviews, as well as guidance on marketing yourself and ways to effectively network. Eugenio Jaramillo, DTM, will boost your confidence and offer tangible takeaways.

Toast Talk Sessions

This first-time event features three experienced speakers who will each speak for 18 minutes on Toastmasters-focused topics. In "From the Inside Out", Duquesa Dean, DTM, will teach you to embrace your authenticity and offer advice on leading and influencing others. Carlos Palacios, DTM, will share how developing your leadership abilities and improving your public speaking and communication skills help build strong relationships in "Unleash Your Potential". And TEDx speaker and coach Linda Clarke will offer insights into storytelling and using Speechcraft to strengthen your abilities in "From Cautious to Courageous—The Journey of Speechcraft".

Toastmasters from across the globe. You can make connections, catch up with friends, and share ideas to take back to your club.

Social activities (most of which require tickets) include:

- Formal dinner and dancing in celebration of the new International President
- Gathering of first-time convention attendees
- Networking lunch with convention attendees
- Smedley Fun 5K Run/Walk

... and singing too

Share your vocal talents and have fun at the Sing-Along, a favorite convention tradition started by Past International President Ted Corcoran, DTM, of Ireland.

The 2023 Toastmasters International Convention in Nassau, Bahamas, will be a vibrant learning experience full of new opportunities. Whether you're there in person or watching online, make the most of your time!

Convention Time

The convention will take place in Nassau, Bahamas, and all events and activities will be on Eastern Daylight Time (EDT) or Universal Coordinated Time (UTC) -4, which is the local time in Nassau, Bahamas. For convenience, a time zone converter will be listed at the top of each convention agenda page.





Meet Lisa Nichols

Keynote speaker for 2023 International Convention will inspire and empower attendees.

By Laura Amann

It's hard not to feel the energy when Lisa Nichols speaks. Her words are inspiring and her enthusiasm infectious. As keynote speaker at this year's International Convention in August, she hopes her speech, "Jumpstart Your Greatness," will harness that energy into empowering you to overcome obstacles or challenges you might be facing in any aspect of your life.

Nichols' goal—her mission, her passion—is to jumpstart people who feel stuck, people who know they can achieve something but are intimidated or overwhelmed by where or how to begin. She sees herself as the ignition to help people reinvent themselves, to create second chances, and to get up after failing.

Her workshops and programs have impacted and inspired entrepreneurs, speakers, authors, and countless others who were held back by their mindset. She's done the same for thousands of businesses across the globe. Her platform now reaches over 80 million people in more than 170 countries, and her social media following is over 1.9 million.

If you feel stagnate or need someone to motivate you, she understands, and her words spring from her own experience. "It's one of those, 'if I can do it, you can too, and let me help you get there,'" she says with a laugh.

Upbringing and Subsequent Success

Born in the often-troubled area of South Central Los Angeles, Nichols struggled in school and was told by one teacher that she should prepare for a desk job at best. By the time she was in her 20s, she had no money, had been

fired from five different jobs, escaped from an abusive relationship, and had just gotten pregnant with her son, whose father went to prison early in her pregnancy.

She went on public assistance, and at one point didn't even have enough money for an emergency set of diapers. Having to wrap her son in towels for two days was the impetus she needed to vow to herself to fix her life.

She started going to conferences, even attending one of them 42 times until she was sure she understood everything they were saying. That hard work paid off, however, and connections made from those conferences led to the capital funding needed to launch [Motivating the Teen Spirit](#), an organization that works to empower teenagers. The success of that organization led her to found [Motivating the Masses](#), which offers workshops and programs to help people transform their lives by changing their mindset. She offers up her own experience and knowledge, and provides encouragement and inspiration, along with plenty of concrete tips and tasks.

Today, Nichols is a highly sought-after keynote and motivational speaker. [Motivating the Masses](#), of which she is chief executive officer, is one of the United States' only publicly traded personal and business development training companies.

She is a *New York Times*-bestselling author of seven books, including the recent *Abundance Now*. She has appeared as an expert on major media programs in the U.S., such as *Oprah*, *The Today Show*, *The Dr. Phil Show*, and *The Steve Harvey Show*.

“Jumpstart Your Greatness”

Lisa Nichols, Keynote Speaker

Wednesday, August 16, 2023

Live and Livestreamed
7 p.m. Eastern Daylight
Time (EDT)/Coordinated
Universal Time (UTC) -4

[Register here](#)

Toastmasters Tie-In

In March 2020, a recently married Nichols moved to The Bahamas to be with her husband. She has a recording studio set up and does most of her videos and programs there, while still traveling extensively around the U.S.

She points out the fortuitous timing of Toastmasters coming to The Bahamas for the International Convention this year, as the country is celebrating its 50th year of independence. Toastmasters has played a rich part in the country's development and [leadership](#), including the current prime minister and deputy prime minister, both of whom are Distinguished Toastmasters.

Helping people find their voice, and use their voice, is an important part of Nichols' work, something that dovetails nicely with Toastmasters.

“It's because of organizations like Toastmasters that people [learn to] speak up and be heard ... they allow us to push past our limitations so we can say what needs to be said,” she says, noting that she still gets much of her inspiration from the words of Gandhi, Mother Teresa, Martin Luther King Jr., and Maya Angelou. “They had to curate their words and message,” she adds.

When Nichols steps onstage in Nassau at the 2023 International Convention, she hopes to ignite a spark in attendees and empower them to tackle something they once thought was impossible.

“I'm a disrupter. I love disrupting complacency, mediocrity. A hopeless moment. A moment of overwhelm,” she says. “There are times in life when we don't know how we landed here, but we need someone to come in and inspire us.”

Editor's Note: Take the [Self-Assessment](#)
Designed by Lisa Nichols.

Laura Amann is managing editor for the *Toastmaster magazine*.



“I want to help people reach goals they may have thought were unfathomable, but that are in fact, very much possible.”

—LISA NICHOLS

Her belief in people is contagious. And it has changed lives.

Motivating Enterprise

Motivating the Masses was founded to help people like herself, people who know they have ability and talent, but don't know how to access their potential and what to do with that desire. She likens her work to being a midwife, helping people birth the next version of themselves, and wants to become for others the person she needed when she was at her lowest.

“I was broke, broke, broke. I needed someone to show me the door or have a key,” she says. “It was a feeling of excitement and discomfort. I knew I had a lot of contribution inside of me, and I needed to know the steps and how-to of getting it out.”

In fact, the name Motivating the Masses came well before the founding of the organization, or any funding was received.

“I named Motivating the Masses back in 1997, when I didn't have the courage to do anything,” she says. “But I stood with a friend, and she said, ‘What do you want to do?’ And I said I wanted to motivate people. She asked who, and I said, *everyone!* That's when she said, ‘You mean the masses?’” And thus the name was born.

Nichols' dream was to take ordinary people who know they have an extraordinary ability inside of them and help them become an extraordinary person, living an extraordinary life, making extraordinary differences, whatever that looks like for each person.

She doesn't just focus on adults, however. Motivating the Teen Spirit has helped 270,000 teens, supported 2,500 dropouts in returning to school, and prevented countless teen suicides. The organization's goal is to help teens discover their full potential and the unique qualities and skills that can help them achieve the life they want.

“Everyone has unlimited potential,” Nichols explains. “I want to help them reach goals they may have thought were unfathomable, but that are in fact, very much possible.”

What she tries to instill in people is the notion that obstacles or challenges aren't the end of the story, and they aren't insurmountable.

“I love the idea that this [obstacle] is a comma and there is something coming after the comma. I'm a product of reinvention ... of second chances. It's not that I never fail, I just learn how to get up.

“There's always a next version of who you are.”



Talented Duo Co-Chair Convention in The Bahamas

Go behind the scenes with the 2023 International Convention Host District Chairs.

By Shannon Dewey

There isn't a better pair to chair the 2023 International Convention than Bahamas-loving duo Anthony "Tony" Longley and Pamela D. Rolle. Not only do the two longtime members share a passion for the islands and Toastmasters, their nearly 30-year friendship plays a significant role in how they've taken on the task of welcoming members to this year's [hybrid convention](#).

Longley, DTM, also known as "Tony the Tiger" by his co-chair and Bahamian members alike, has lived in The Bahamas all his life. He and his wife, Jackie, have been married 40 years and have two daughters. While his profession and 36-year tenure in Toastmasters have kept him busy, he takes pride in mentoring beginners in both areas, and still finds time to enjoy his hobbies of photography and long-distance running.

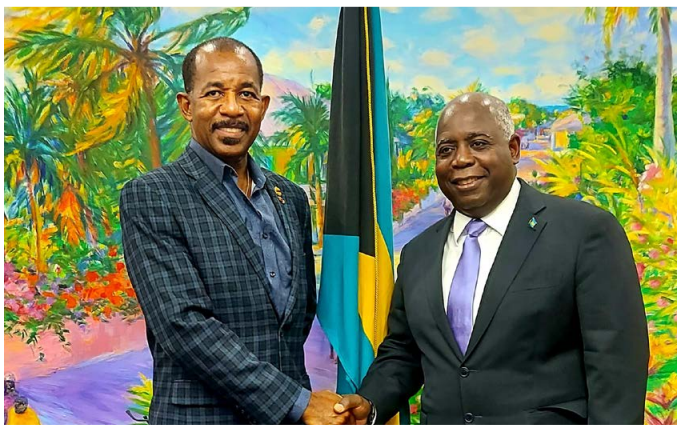
Rolle, DTM, also fills the seat for this year's convention chair. She currently lives and works in The Bahamas and has been a Toastmaster for 23 years. Rolle helps others through mentoring and coaching and believes having a vision for your life is important to overall success. When she's not working or volunteering her time, she enjoys the great outdoors, seafood, and shoe shopping.



Past International Director Tony Longley, DTM, speaks at the District 47 Hall of Fame in Nassau, Bahamas, in July 2022.



Pamela D. Rolle, DTM, a member for 23 years, speaking onstage during a Toastmasters event.



Longley shakes hands with fellow Toastmaster and Bahamas Prime Minister Philip Davis, DTM.



Rolle takes a picture with Toastmasters International President Matt Kinsey, DTM.

“We have worked well together on numerous Toastmasters-related projects over many years, from the club level to the District.”

—TONY LONGLEY, DTM

Get to know these District 47 members and how they collaborate as co-chairs, and find out some insider facts about their beautiful backyard—[The Bahamas](#).

Can you tell us a little more about yourselves?

Tony: I was born into a closely knit family to a single mother in the city of Nassau, Bahamas. I am the fourth of her five children. For nearly four decades, I have enjoyed a distinguished and rewarding career in the insurance industry. I represent the country’s largest insurance carrier as an executive financial services representative. I attribute my career success largely to the communication training received in Toastmasters.

Pamela: I work for a global offshore bank as a senior vice president and team leader in fiduciary services. I earned a Master of Business Administration degree and hold the Trust & Estate Practitioners (T.E.P.) professional designation. I’m also a member of the Society of Trust &

Estate Practitioners (S.T.E.P.), London, England, and of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Incorporated.

Have you attended a Toastmasters convention before?

Tony: My first International Convention experience was in St. Louis, Missouri, in 1996. I witnessed David Nottage deliver a phenomenal speech titled “Get Up,” which won him the World Championship of Public Speaking. Also, I met the late Robert Barnhill, 1996–1997 International President, and his lovely wife, Jana, who also later became International President in 2008–2009. In 2012, she attended our District 47 Fall Conference in Nassau, Bahamas (Matt Kinsey was District Governor), and I had the pleasurable honor of taking her on a tour of the island. I’ve attended about a dozen International Conventions to date and each one presented a uniquely exhilarating experience. As a result, I now have very close friends in Toastmasters around the world.



Longley, an avid photographer for 45 years, poses for someone else's camera.



Rolle stands proudly next to the flag of The Bahamas at a past Toastmasters convention.

Pamela: I have attended several conventions and gave five stars to each event. I recall my very first convention in 2009 at the MGM Grand at Foxwoods in Mashantucket, Connecticut. I was impressed that so many Toastmasters took the time to come together and celebrate each other. The opening ceremonies are etched in my mind. I have met many lifelong friends at convention.

What makes Nassau, Bahamas, a great location for convention?

Tony: The island of New Providence, where you'll find the capital city of Nassau, is easily accessible from anywhere in the world. There are non-stop connections from London and major cities in Canada and throughout the U.S.

The weather is generally fantastic year-round, and our beaches are ranked as some of the most beautiful in the world. Whether your preference is snorkeling, scuba diving, fishing, jet skiing, or just basking in the radiant sunshine on the powdery sand while sipping on a "Bahama Mama" cocktail, you'll have a blast. At night, enjoy the wonderful entertainment and dining experiences at the Grand Hyatt. There's also a water adventure park for the young and the "young at heart."

Pamela: In addition to the tropical climate, the cuisine is simply amazing. You can relax on one of our award-winning beaches and enjoy miles of irresistibly blue waters or visit the secluded pink sand beaches.

Nassau is home to national parks, walking trails, and some of the best diving spots in the world.

As a goodwill ambassador for convention, what does your role entail?

Tony: My co-chair Pamela and I are charged with the responsibility of handling the logistics on the ground in The Bahamas. That involves recruiting and coordinating the Helping Hands volunteers and committee chairs, assisting World Headquarters meeting planners with speaker selections, liaising with local governmental agencies and officials for relevant support services, and promoting the convention, just to highlight a few.

Tell us about your shared history, before you became co-chairs.

Pamela: I've known "Tony the Tiger" Longley for almost 30 years. He is the insurance agent for most of my family, including myself. Tony was instrumental in me becoming a member of Toastmasters. Over the years while in our leadership roles, we mentored each other along the way. I depended on Tony as a mentor while serving as a club officer and, soon after, I preceded him into District leadership.

Tony wanted to become a Division Director—and he did. Meanwhile, I continued mentoring him while serving as District Director and appointed him as Public Relations Manager for District 47. He became

“What I find most rewarding is the fact that I am playing a part in making memorable convention experiences for our members.”

—PAMELA D. ROLLE, DTM

the first Bahamian to serve in this position—and he did not disappoint. Our roles switched again recently when Tony served as International Director from Region 8 (2018-2020), marking another first for a Bahamian Toastmaster. Now, in a reciprocal way, he’s mentoring me again.

Tony: There’s not much for me to add to the aforementioned comments by Pamela. I am a charter member of her home club, Healing Communicators Toastmasters Club. We have worked well together on numerous Toastmasters-related projects over many years, from the club level to the District.

How do you collaborate with each other and share responsibilities?

Pamela: To borrow a phrase, “No person is an island, and it takes a village.” In this instance, the village is both of us. Tony and I have regular phone conversations to discuss our approach to specific convention deliverables to ensure we have a clear understanding of what is required and how we will respond. Tony likes to delegate, and so do I, and he knows that if I have an assignment, no matter how challenging, I will get it done.

Tony: We have the advantage of working together in past experiences; therefore, we understand each other’s individual strengths and weaknesses. We take a collaborative approach to decision-making and know how to come to a compromise when there is a difference of opinion. On our assignments, we yield a particular task to the one with the stronger skill set, while the other gives support. If one is lagging on an assignment, the other would pick up the slack where possible. In the end, however, we will present the finished product as a collective achievement.

What do you find most rewarding about the process?

Tony: The opportunity to learn from each other and grow as we gradually advance deeper into the planning process. Also, the anticipation of working with experienced and emerging leaders from our home District and the wider Toastmasters International communities. The greatest reward, however, would be to host thousands of visiting Toastmasters and leaders from around the world. Meanwhile, we’re wrestling with the anxiety of unfolding an exceedingly amazing experience during the 2023 International Convention.

Pamela: What I find most rewarding is the fact that I am playing a part in making memorable convention experiences for our members. Based on this convention experience, we are hopeful that our next club officer, next District leader, or International Director will be in attendance and will go back to their clubs excited, refreshed, and reignited.

What will you take away from this leadership experience that you didn’t know before?

Pamela: Although at the District level I had the opportunity to plan conferences, this is the pinnacle of planning in that I will be working with a broader group of members outside my home District. This will allow me to see things from their perspective as I continue to learn and grow in Toastmasters.

Tony: We’re learning that the scope of responsibilities is much broader for an International Convention. We’ve already recognized that to be successful requires identifying and matching the right volunteers, with the right skills, to the right roles. We’re learning through this process that cohesion, communication, and commitment are what will pull us through this project successfully.

Do you have any fun facts about The Bahamas for those attending in person?

Tony: The Bahamas is an archipelago of 700 islands and cays, less than 40 of them being inhabited. Referred to as the “Out Islands” or “family islands,” most of them are quaint and tranquil and remain unspoiled by the influences of modern-day development. On many of these islands, the inhabitants live close to nature, growing their own fruits and vegetables and raising their own farm animals to enjoy fresh organic meat.

The Bahamas Historical Society and the Pompey Museum, both located in Downtown Nassau, are great resources for diving into the rich history of this wonderful country.

Pamela: Convention attendees will have a lot of activities to choose from. You can book a one-day sail-away trip to one of our uninhabited islands and relax in a hammock. You can take part in the Dolphin Swim experience, where you receive a unique, playful, and educational interaction with these wonderful animals in the beautiful turquoise waters of a natural ocean lagoon. You can retrace the steps of pirates and delve into the island’s pirating history at several locations. Fort Fincastle, which was built in 1793 to protect the island against pirates, sits at the top of the Queen’s Staircase, a 102-foot (31-meter) flight of 66 steps, carved by hand out of a limestone hill. It was designed to allow a fast escape route to the Fort. Families can also enjoy the interactive portrayal at Pirates of Nassau Museum.

Ready to pack your bags? Rolle, Longley, fellow Bahamian Toastmasters, and District 47 members at-large will be there to greet you when you arrive. Registration for this hybrid event is open for both in-person and online experiences. [Explore](#) the sea of possibilities today.

Shannon Dewey is digital strategy and engagement editor for the Toastmaster magazine.

How to Maintain Your Motivation

Start the program year right and stay confident, in control, and connected.

By Megan Preston Meyer

There's something inherently motivating about a new year. Whether we're setting resolutions in January or planning out a new Toastmasters year in July, a fresh beginning can fill us with energy. The whole calendar stretches open before us, there's room for endless possibility, and every single goal we can think of seems within our grasp.

But motivation can be slippery, and sometimes the ambition we feel when standing at the starting point can wane as we make our way toward the finish.

The psychology of motivation has been heavily studied, and researchers have identified basic psychological needs that serve as the foundation. Edward L. Deci and Richard M. Ryan call them *competence*, *autonomy*, and *relatedness*. In his book *Drive: The Surprising Truth About What Motivates Us*, Daniel Pink calls them *mastery*, *autonomy*, and *purpose*.

The names may change from framework to framework, but the bottom line is the same: We feel motivated when we feel confident, in control, and connected. Luckily, Toastmasters provides a basis for all three factors so we can persist with pursuing our goals—both in the club environment and beyond.

Feeling Confident

In order to feel motivated to achieve a goal, we have to feel confident in our ability to do so. Psychologists call this *competence* or *mastery*; almost every goal requires skill, and we need to feel that we have—or can acquire—those skills. Toastmasters is, at its core, a place to learn; for goals related to communication and leadership, it's the perfect place to gain confidence.

Stephanie Roy of Talk It Up Toastmasters in Windsor, Connecticut, has taught martial arts for more than 25 years and knows a thing or two about mastery. The best way to build competence, she says, is to practice. "Just like any physical activity, you've got to put in the reps."

Use your club as a place to take risks, improve, and learn from your mistakes. Roy says, "We always say this with the martial arts, too: You make as many mistakes as you can, as quickly as you can, until you reach your inner genius." Toastmasters provides the perfect environment to reach that genius and to carry forth that confidence.

Competence within the club can motivate you outside of your meetings, as well. Alexander Kuch, a former member of Rhetorik-Club Heilbronn Toastmasters in Heilbronn, Germany, credits the skills that he polished in Toastmasters for helping him in his professional life. "I've always been a confident person, but without Toastmasters, I wouldn't be able to articulate myself confidently in a diplomatic way."

Diplomatic communication was essential during his recent fellowship with the German government, as was the ability to think on his feet. "We would get a visitor at 12 o'clock," he recalls. "I would be told at 11 o'clock to come up with a political summary of an entire country in one hour." Luckily, he had experience to draw on. "Table Topics [teaches you] how to come up with something on the spot. Of course, in politics, you can't just make things up," he adds, but the confidence he gained, and the practice under pressure, served him well.

Feeling in Control

In addition to feeling confident in our ability to achieve a goal, we also need to feel like we're in charge of how we get there. *Autonomy* is the idea that we have control over our outcomes. If every step is dictated to us exactly, we feel like we're being ordered around instead of forging our own path; too much structure can make us feel caged in. On the other hand, too much freedom can be just as paralyzing, leaving you wondering where to begin. Finding the right balance between structure and flexibility is essential to maintaining motivation.

Tammy Nischuk, a member of Dynamically Speaking Club in Lethbridge, Alberta, Canada, finds that Toastmasters blends the two beautifully. "There's just so much to appreciate in the structure, which [provides] predictability across the world," she says. "There's a degree of psychological safety. ... You can walk into the room and know that you're going to be welcome there, but there's also a degree of adventure because each club takes things in a slightly different way. There's always a little element of surprise and delight, no matter where you go."

That balance is built in to every element of Toastmasters, including the approach to learning. Nischuk credits



“Every Thursday morning, there’s a group of tremendously positive and excited people who come out of a Toastmasters meeting and go into the rest of their day ready to uplift, encourage, and inspire others.”

—TAMMY NISCHUK

her mentor with introducing her to the idea of flexibility within Pathways. “She said, ‘It’s a lesson in creativity. Make it work for you.’” Nischuk did, and now encourages new Toastmasters to make it work for them, as well.

“If somebody’s coming into Toastmasters from purely a professional development mindset, it’s okay to say, ‘Look, you may not want to go in order. Let’s get your Ice Breaker knocked out and then let’s look at what’s coming up in your professional life and start matching some of the Pathways projects to those professional goals.’”

Roy agrees. “It’s all about integration.” When she’s developing an idea or building a habit that will move her toward a goal, “I find the Pathways project that fits it best and I use Toastmasters as the platform to reinforce it for myself.”

Finding the right blend between structure and flexibility helps her to stay motivated. “I like it when there’s a little bit of controlled chaos,” Roy laughs. No matter what your preferred balance may be, maintaining some control over the chaos will help you keep momentum toward fulfilling your goals.

Feeling Connected

Not only do we want to feel confident and in control as we work toward our goals, but we also want to see how achieving them will link us to the world—and to the people—around us. This sense of *relatedness* or *purpose* is powerful.

“We’re all motivated by different things,” says Nischuk, “but the one thing the world needs now more than ever is connection and a sense of community.”

Her online Toastmasters club practices “intentional inclusivity” to foster that connection among its members, and the effects are contagious. “Every Thursday morning, there’s a group of tremendously positive and excited people who come out of a Toastmasters meeting and go into the rest of their day ready to uplift, encourage, and inspire others.”

Kuch found inspiring others and helping them succeed to be very motivating during his government fellowship. “I used my Toastmasters skills to coach other people,” he says. “It was a great opportunity to see not just the

speaking [skills] coming out but the leadership [skills] as well.”

Roy also values the opportunity to connect with and support her fellow members. “I like helping people. I enjoy teaching. I enjoy sharing things that I find interesting with other people who also find them interesting.” The knowledge that her efforts contribute to her fellow members’ success keeps her coming back. “Every meeting, there are people I’m showing up for. I want to do a good job for people. I want to contribute and to help their journey. That motivates me.”

Feeling Motivated

As you go into the new Toastmasters year, use these concepts from the psychology of motivation to build the foundation for success. Take advantage of Toastmasters to build skills, supply structure, and foster relationships, and then take these advantages out into the world with you. When you feel confident, in control, and connected, you’ll have the momentum to stay motivated throughout the new year—and beyond.

Megan Preston Meyer is the author of the *Supply Jane* and *Fifo Adventures*, as well as *Fire-brand: A Corporate Elements Mystery*. She lives in Switzerland and is a regular contributor to the *Toastmaster* magazine. Learn more at supply-jane.com.



Are Your Behavioral Patterns Causing Burnout?

Advice for managing your mental state.

By Sara Mayer, DTM

If you're a high-achieving individual, you probably take on too much and push yourself too hard in your personal or professional life. Maybe you sign up for multiple meeting roles in your Toastmasters club, say yes to extra projects at work, or agree to host your entire family for the holidays. This type of overcommitment can cause burnout.

Living with constant stress can lead to feelings of exhaustion, disillusionment, and a lack of motivation. Learn how you can create positive patterns to avoid burnout in your work, personal life, and Toastmasters.

Defining and Identifying Burnout

Burnout is a term that has been thrown around quite a bit recently. We all know it's bad, but do we know what it is, why it occurs, and how to identify it? Burnout is a state of emotional, physical, and mental exhaustion caused by prolonged stress. It's a state where you feel depleted and unable to cope with the demands of your daily life. If you are constantly feeling overwhelmed, exhausted, and disengaged, then you may be experiencing burnout. It can lead to decreased performance and motivation, feelings of detachment, and cynicism.

One of the most important steps in avoiding burnout is to recognize it early. Some of the most common signs include feeling tired, irritable, and unmotivated. You may also feel distant from or uninterested in your work or personal life. Other symptoms include physical and mental fatigue, a lack of interest in activities you used to enjoy,

- **Eating Poorly:** Eating a diet that's high in sugar, fat, and processed foods can lead to fatigue, mood swings, and decreased productivity. This can make it harder to focus and maintain energy levels.
- **Not Enough Sleep:** Sleep is essential for our physical and mental health. Just

Incorporating positive behavioral patterns into your daily routine can reduce stress and improve your overall well-being.

and a decrease in productivity. If you're feeling overwhelmed and unable to cope with responsibilities, this could be a sign that you're experiencing burnout.

Common Behaviors That Cause Burnout

Procrastination, passive-aggressive behavior, saying yes to everything, taking on too many responsibilities, eating poorly, not getting enough sleep, and "couch potatoing"—these are all behaviors that can lead to burnout. If these behaviors continue for some time, then they can become habits, and eventually cause stress and anxiety, leading to burnout. Let's explore each of these potential habits.

- **Procrastination:** Procrastination is a common habit, and when we put off important tasks until the last minute, we create unnecessary stress and anxiety for ourselves.
- **Passive Aggression:** Passive-aggressive behavior, such as avoiding conflict or refusing to communicate directly, can lead to frustration and tension in relationships. This can create a hostile work or personal environment.
- **Saying Yes to Everything:** Many of us have a hard time saying no, even when we're already overwhelmed with responsibilities. Taking on too much can lead to being overwhelmed and stressed.

like when you eat poorly, not getting enough sleep can also lead to fatigue, mood swings, and decreased productivity, similarly making it harder to focus and maintain energy levels.

- **"Couch Potatoing":** Spending too much time on the couch, watching TV, or engaging in other sedentary activities for prolonged periods trains your body and brain to also become inactive, which can lead to decreased physical and mental health.

While it may be hard to adjust your behaviors at first, starting small can make a big difference. Here are nine tips to get started:

1 Take focused action. Identify the most important tasks you need to accomplish each day and focus on completing them. Avoid multitasking and try to concentrate on one task at a time.

2 Schedule. Use a planner or scheduling app to plan your day in advance. Schedule breaks and time for activities that you enjoy, such as reading, exercising, or spending time with loved ones.

3 Be straightforward. Communicate openly and honestly with colleagues and loved ones about your needs and limitations. Say no when necessary.

4 Set boundaries. Learn to say no to requests that are not important or urgent. Establish boundaries around your time and energy.

5 Delegate. Learn to delegate tasks to others when possible. Avoid taking on too much responsibility.

6 Nourish your body. Eat a healthy diet, drink plenty of water, and avoid consuming too much caffeine or alcohol.

7 Create restoration time. Take some time off work, if possible. Go on a vacation or take a staycation.

8 Exercise. Regular exercise can help reduce stress and improve your mood. Find an activity you enjoy and make it a regular part of your routine.

9 Set a bedtime. Aim to get seven to eight hours of sleep each night. Create a relaxing bedtime routine to help you wind down.

Incorporating these positive behavioral patterns into your daily routine can reduce stress and improve your overall well-being. If you do find yourself experiencing burnout, it's important to take action to pull yourself out of it. For example, if you're a club officer, delegate tasks to others when feeling overwhelmed. You can also set boundaries to ensure you don't take on too much (such as avoiding taking on meeting roles too frequently).

By identifying and changing your behavioral patterns, you can avoid burnout and maintain a healthy work-life balance. Remember to check in with yourself regularly, get enough sleep and movement, set boundaries, and delegate tasks when necessary.

Sara Mayer, DTM, is a strategic business consultant who believes you can set and crush bold goals without working double-time. Learn more at saramayer.com.

That's So Funny ...

... I forgot to laugh.

By John Cadley

You're a good person. You see someone suffering and you want to help. You've heard that "laughter is the best medicine" so you make a little joke. Perhaps you do make the person feel better ... or perhaps they punch you in the nose. If so, you have now learned that there are times *not* to be funny.

This may sound odd coming from a professional humor writer, but I've seen too many amateurs put their foot in their mouth not to know it's true. Not only is it painful to watch; it rubs off on professionals like me who do know when to put a sock in it.

"What do you do?"

"I write a humor column."

"Oh, you mean you're one of those people who thinks they're funny but they're not?"

I can't afford that. I could lose my job and then it's back to SpaghettiOs for dinner. So please listen while I tell you when *not* to be funny.

Let's start with an impacted wisdom tooth—not yours, of course, but somebody else's. Yes, their swollen cheek makes them look like a chipmunk with a two-pound walnut. But you can't laugh, not even when they tell you they have a dentist appointment and it comes out as, "Ah hahb a denbish apahmint." This person is in pain. You *can* secretly rejoice that it's not you who's suffering—I mean, that goes without saying. Just don't show it. No wisecracks about how the orthodontist will have them in stitches, or "Now you can put your money where your mouth is." They just *might* laugh, in which case the pressure will blow the tooth through a window, and you've gone from a toothache to "This is 911. What is your emergency?"

Remember, too—airport security is not Comedy Central. You are in one of those rare situations where *nobody* wants to be there. The



passengers don't like having their nail clippers confiscated, and airport security agents don't like you trying to fool them by hiding baby alligators in a sock. You just want to get on the plane; the TSA workers just want to get away from people who are usually impatient, sometimes rude, and occasionally crazy. This is *not* the time to walk through the scanner and say, "I bet you can see right through me!" They see through you, all right, and you don't want to know what they see.

So please listen while
I tell you when *not*
to be funny.

Another time to curb the comedy is when you see your friend on a recumbent bicycle. Yes, they look ridiculous, peddling with their feet up in the air—and even more so wearing a helmet. They're practically on the ground anyway. The farthest they could fall is two inches. You want to say, "Gee, it must be nice to exercise lying down." Don't. People who ride recumbent bikes are so serious about

exercising they call it training—for what, I don't know, but they're serious, and what is the opposite of *serious*? Funny. With an average body fat index of .004%, these hard bodies have no corporeal cushioning. If you make them laugh, they crack a rib.

Another No Fun Zone is the Internal Revenue Service. Oh, they can laugh, all right. Who wouldn't when they see deductions for salad as a healthcare expense?

But familiarity breeds contempt, and IRS agents have seen enough of these bonehead entries to where it *isn't* funny anymore. So if you think you can write off pet food as a business expense because your cat keeps mice out of your home office, send your cat to the audit.

And just in case you need reminding, law enforcement—specifically as it involves you—is no place to display your rapier wit. Getting pulled over for speeding ... making a court appearance for 79 unpaid parking tickets ... being indicted—these are all times when even the most clever remark will be as welcome as a fly in your fruit salad. You want to talk about serious? This is Serious Central, where humor is known as Contempt of Court. When the judge asks if you know the penalty for perjury, don't answer, "Is it less than what I'll get if I tell the truth?" They'll throw the book at you. Then they'll throw the gavel.

I hope you see the point here: Just because you *can* be funny doesn't mean you *should* be. Humor can heal or it can hurt. It can bring smiles or tears. It can make you the life of the party or get you thrown out of a funeral home. There's no funny explanation for that. Don't even try.

John Cadley is a former advertising copywriter and currently a musician working in upstate New York. Learn more at cadleys.com.

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CLIENT SPOTLIGHT - BO BENNETT, DTM

You might know Bo as the creator of FreeToastHost, the host of the Toastmasters Podcast, or the Founder of eBookIt.com. Or perhaps you never heard of the guy. Either way, you will enjoy his latest book, *Some Really Personal, Yet Entertaining Stories From My Life That You Will Enjoy and May Even Find Inspiring*.

What is a "normal childhood?" Does it include almost being murdered by your sister with an ax? Speeding around town in the back of a station wagon because your mom is chasing an "alien spaceship"? Being busted by the police for intent to light a pond on fire? Tackling your mom to the ground and wrestling a knife out of her hand because she was trying to kill your dad? While my stories may be unique, readers will be able to relate to the broader themes that are part of a normal childhood such as sibling rivalry, eccentric parents, doing stupid things, and frequently preventing one's parents from literally murdering each other.

Although some of the subject matter is not something one would generally laugh at, you have my permission to laugh. Social rules don't apply here; my rules do. It works for me, and who knows, after reading the stories from my past, you might be inspired to see your own screwed up past in a more humorous light.

Some Really Personal, Yet Entertaining Stories From My Life That You Will Enjoy and May Even Find Inspiring by Bo Bennett is available in ebook, paperback, and audio, at 

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